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San Diego-born Actor/Writer Rick Najera Nominated for 2002 Alma Award

SAN DIEGO – May 1, 2002 – Among 35 million Latinos in the United States, San Diego's own Rick Najera, along with Latin Hollywood's finest entertainers, has been nominated for a 2002 Alma Award for best writer for a television series. The Alma (American Latino Media Arts) Awards, which honors outstanding artistic achievement and the enhancement of Latinos in television, film, and music, is one of the biggest honorary entertainment celebration venues of the year.

Najera is being nominated for his writing, among four others in this category, for **Outstanding Script for a Television Drama or Comedy** for Ponderosa's episode of "The Legend of John Riley," made for PAX Television. Najera started out as an actor at the Old Globe Theater and went on to the San Diego Repertory Theater after graduating from The American Conservatory Theater masters program. He was then accepted into the prestigious Warner Brothers Studio's writing program and immediately started work as a feature writer for the hit slapstick comedy series, *In Living Color*. **"QUOTE FROM RICK"**

Najera's talented work spans the spectrum with writing credits in *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*, *In Living Color*, *Robert Townsend Television*, *Culture Clash*, *Ponderosa* and his screenplay, *Buford Gomez* recently was shown at the San Diego Latino Film Festival. He has written plays such as *Latinologues*, *Pain of the Macho* and *Quiet Love*, which have been performed in theaters across the country. His book, *Pain of the Macho* is required reading in universities and his play *Latinologues*, which is currently showing in Chicago and Dallas is a showcase for Latino actors and has been performed by more than 60 renowned actors such as Edward James Olmos, Gerald Rivera, Christina, Maria Conchita Alonso Jacob Vargas, Mario Lopez and Tony Plana to name a few. Najera's biography and full list of credits can be found at www.ricknajera.net/

This year's ALMA Awards, hosted by Paul Rodriguez, will be a night of glitter and glitz among Latin Hollywood's most talented. Celebs such as Antonio Banderas, Benjamin Bratt, Penelope Cruz, Jennifer Lopez, Benicio Del Toro, Andy Garcia, Selma Hayek, Jacob Vargas and John Leguizamo are only a sweet sampling of the nominations for this year's glamour-filled event. In addition to the list of talented nominees, well-known Latin entertainers such as Marc Anthony, Ozomatli, Paulina Rubio, Juanes & Nelly Furtado and La Ley are scheduled to perform. The Awards will tape in Los Angeles at the Shrine Auditorium on May 18 and will air on June 1, 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm (ET/PT) on ABC.

About The Alma Awards

"The ALMA Awards was created in 1995 as part of NCLR's strategy to promote fair, accurate, and balanced portrayals of Latinos in television, film, and music. Born out of a direct response to negative stereotyping of Latinos in entertainment, these awards honor Latino performers for their outstanding artistic achievement, impact, and enhancement of the image of Latinos. The show was named "ALMA" (Spanish for "spirit" or "soul") which represents the determined spirit of the Latino people in an effort to reflect the spirit as well as the scope of the awards program. The ALMA Awards, the only two-hour Latino-themed primetime awards show for film, music, and television on any of the four major networks, were created as part of NCLR's strategy to promote accurate, fair, and positive images of Latinos in the media." For more information, please visit www.almaawards.com/

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) was founded in 1968 to improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans and is the largest national Hispanic civil rights organization. Please visit our website at www.nclr.org.

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